MARCH
APRIL
1969

WRL NEWS

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APRIL ACTION

April Action, a pacifist coalition group based in Philadelphia, has designated April 3-6, the four days beginning with Passover and ending with Easter, as *Days of Resistance & Renewal.*

"The WRL gives full support to this project and has taken an active part in planning it," said David McReynolds, the League's field secretary in a recent letter to the membership. "We call on all of you to make this a period of renewal for the movement. Rather than following the pattern of a single massive rally in a single city, we are urging community demonstrations across the nation in as many cities and towns as possible."

For details about action in your community April 3-6, contact your local peace groups.

MAY 1
NEXT DRAFT CARD TURN-IN

May 1 is the date of the next national draft card turn-in sponsored by The Resistance.

Persons wishing to participate should contact their local Resistance group.

"MOVING THE MOVEMENT"

Since the July-August WRL NEWS announced our eviction (after 25 years) as of August 30, we have been receiving little notes from our members: *"When* are you moving?" etc. Some WRLers, to-make-sure-just-in-case, wrote on their envelopes: "Please forward."

Now, finally, the date for "Moving the Movement" (the groovy name given the committee raising funds for this operation), has been set for May. Many of you already have contributed, but if you haven't, there's still time (Contributions should be addressed to Moving the Movement, 5 Beekman St., New York, N.Y. 10038).

The new location is at *339 Lafayette Street (zip code—10012),* right next to the Bleecker Street stop on the eastside IRT subway and a block from the Broadway-Lafayette stop on the Independent line. It is directly across the street from where CNVA was located before moving to 5 Beekman.

Organizations involved in the moving in addition to WRL are The Resistance, Catholic Peace Fellowship, Teachers Committee for Peace in Vietnam, National Mobilization Committee, New York Workshop in Nonviolence and WIN and Liberation magazines.

PROTEST PRESIDIO PRISON TERMS

This photo shows one of the many protest demonstrations—east and west—following the sentencing February 14 and 15 of three Presidio stockade prisoners to 14, 15 and 16 years in prison. This picketing took place in Times Square, New York, in the late afternoon of February 17, and was co-sponsored by WRL and The Resistance.

In San Francisco, WRL co-sponsored an all-night candlelight vigil in front of City Hall followed by a march on the Army Base.

The excessive sentences were imposed for "mutiny," which, in reality, was a peaceful sitdown strike on October 14 to protest the subhuman conditions in the stockade and the slaying, three days previous, of Richard Bunch, a mentally disturbed prisoner. The three men sentenced were Nesry Sood, Lawrence Reidel and Louis Osczpinski. A fourth won a change of venue and was sentenced to four years. As this issue goes to press, 15 more are about to go on trial. A total of 27 have been charged with mutiny.

The Committee for the 27 has just set up a national coordinating office at 1029 Vermont Ave. NW (Room 200), Washington, D.C. 20005.

AS THIS ISSUE WENT TO PRESS, March 18, the Army announced that Nesrey Sood's sentence had been reduced from 15 years to 2 years.

Nonviolent Action on Latin America

The pacifist concern with Latin America, which Glenn Smiley reported to the December WRL executive committee meeting, was translated into nonviolent action March 19 when a team of 12 U.S. pacifists conducted a 2-day vigil at Fort Gulick in the Panama Canal Zone. WRLers on the team were George Willoughby and Tom Cornell of the executive committee and Thomas Dorney, the League's representative in Puerto Rico.

Fort Gulick is the military training center for counter-insurgency. In conjunction with the Panama action, there was a demonstration and teach-out in Washington at Inter-American Defense College, founded in 1962 to teach counter-insurgency.

Sponsoring the project is a Quaker Action Group.

CO's and the Amnesty Campaign of World War 1

by Frances Witherspoon

Besides being extremely well written, even eloquent, David McReynold's article on amnesty has given me much to think about. For the truth is amnesty to me has suggested all-out CO's rather than some of the other protestors whom he names in asking for a *general* amnesty for all persons who have protested and are protesting either *all* wars or this particular abomination alone. He would include even deserters from the Army and Navy, exiles to Canada and other countries, indeed *every kind* of anti-war protestor, whatever his particular form of protest.

The truth is, some of the extremist forms of protest such as the Catonsville Nine, etc. do not, to use a modern term, "turn me on." I acknowledge their bravery and dedication. I just do not care for their particular kind of protest, nor am I sure of its effectiveness over other varieties. But as I said in my opening paragraph, McReynolds is giving me a good deal to think over in his demand for *general* amnesty.

He, of course, would not know of the part that Tracy Mygatt and I played in World War I, both in opposing U.S. entry into the war, and in urging amnesty for CO's and political prisoners at its close. If you should ever be interested in the history of amnesty in this country, you might sometime care to read the reminiscences she and I gave to the Oral History Research Library at Columbia, copies of which are now in the Peace Library at Swarthmore and our own Bryn Mawr College Library.

In these reminiscences we tell of intensive lobbying against the approach of World War I for which Woodrow Wilson had been zealously preparing. We did this in the company of such persons as David Starr Jordan, President of Leland Stanford, Emily Greene Balch, one of the founders of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Longfellow's grandson, Harry Longfellow Dana, and other prominent persons. We go on to describe how, in a huddled group of some 20 persons, in the shadows of a *supposedly cleared* House Gallery, Tracy and I actually heard the war-vote of the full Congress, heard the "nays" of the 5 Senators—that little group of "willful men"—listened breathlessly to the five negative votes of the 50 Representatives, including Jeannette Rankin's historic "I love my country, but I cannot vote for war."

Back in New York one week later, we helped set up the Bureau of Legal Advice to procure legal aid for war protestors arrested at street meetings, and particularly to furnish such help as we could to CO's before their draft boards, this in a day when the law made no provision for them whatsoever. Among the well-known New Yorkers on our committee was Fola LaFollette, daughter of the great Wisconsin Senator. We raised enough money to retain two attorneys at modest fees, and continued our work, despite a raid upon our office by NY's District Attorney, until forced by the hostility of our fellow tenants, to leave 70 Fifth Avenue in the Fall of 1918.

After the November armistice, housed above the FOR at 128 East 28th Street, we continued our limited activity. And now came *our first appeal for amnesty for CO's*. On Christmas Day 1918, I conducted a small delegation of men and women to Washington to appeal to the then Secretary of War Newton D. Baker, to free CO's. In our group was the mother of Norman and Evan Thomas (in Leavenworth on a 20 year sentence) and Mrs. Henry Villard, mother of Oswald. It was the fact of having Mrs. Villard in our group that had procured us the appointment. For Baker, a former Liberal, expressed the greatest adimration for Mrs. Villard's father, William Lloyd Garrison, the great abolitionist and early pacifist. Mrs. Villard had come to ask Baker if he didn't feel badly to be keeping brave, patriotic Americans in prison for conscience' sake, on Christmas day.

The second amnesty appeal in which Tracy and I took part was the Christmas Day parade up Fifth Avenue in 1919. Rev. Percy Stickney Grant, Rector of the Church of the Ascencion, 10th Street and Fifth Avenue (that good scout whom Bishop Manning was to later denounce for his love-affair) had given us permission to start the "walk" from the Parish House at the time of the church service. But we were denied the permission we asked for by the Police Department. We told Dr. Grant of this, but he said that we were to go ahead just the same.

There were some 200 of us—a pretty large number for those early Pacifist days—who carried signs calling for "Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men" and also "Free All Conscientious Objectors." The irate police tore many of these signs from our hands and dashed them to the snowy streets. Our procession was headed by an automobile in which rode some of the most illustrious pacifists of that day, Harry Laidler among them, dressed in choir-robes and singing Christmas carols.

Most of us did get up to 59th Street, despite some rough handling, and next day there was an inquiry before the Police Commissioner. But most important was the wide press coverage across the country.

NEW WRL GROUP IN DELAWARE

By way of introducing the most recently formed WRL chapter—in Newark, Delaware—we print here a poem entitled "Why I Joined WRL" by one of its local members, Rich Ashkanasi:

many answers
i disapprove of violence . . . . . .
i disapprove of the slaughter of
innocent people
i disapprove of someone or some
group of people like a country
playing god
i disapprove of the Vietnam war
i disapprove of war
i disapprove of, and refuse to
participate in any of these
one person's voice is much softer
than many
two heads are better than one
three heads are better than two
many heads are better than three
. . . but what can i do about it ?
i'm just one person . . .
two people . . .
three people . . .
many people. . . . WRL

Headquarters for the new group is the home of Edward Sohowski, 530 Tamara Circle, Newark, Delaware 19711.

NEW GROUP IN OHIO

"Our newly-formed WRL chapter has just organized a city-wide high school group and has started an underground newspaper, THE SHACKLED DOVE," reports Michael Orock, the chapter's leader. We now have members in many of the local high schools carrying on a program of peace education and draft counseling. Through our efforts, a spokesman for the American Friends Service Committee has spoken at several of the schools."

The chapter can be contacted c/o Michael Orock, 15 S. Highland (4), Akron, Ohio 44303.

CUBA REPORT

by Maris Cakars

The first thing that you have to do to understand Cuba is get over the idea of trying to compare Cuba to the United States. The "90 miles from home" business is to a great extent irrelevant because Cuba, both before and since the revolution, has very little in common with the U.S. in terms of economics, culture and the goals of the society. Perhaps before the revolution—when they had racial discrimination, exploitation of the workers by capitalists—a North American might have felt more at home. But now, ten years since the revolution, everything is so different that comparisons between them and us are practically meaningless.

How do you compare a society where the collective good is the highest priority to one where getting something for yourself is the most important thing

As I traveled around Cuba for three weeks I saw many new schools, hospitals, factories. All of that was very impressive, especially if one realizes that throughout the rest of Latin America there is not another factory that makes prefabricated housing or a population which is very nearly literate. Everywhere there are these tangible signs of a country building itself up: new roads, newly planted fields, brand new machinery being put to work. But we've all heard about that. I can only report that it's true.

Very soon, however, the visitor is confronted with the stark austerity that exists in Cuba today. I would have thought that ten years after the revolution the people would have a little bit more than just enough. But they don't. Except for food stores and book stores, the shelves are literally empty. Long lines are seen everywhere.

Why The Austerity?

There's a reason for this. Immediately after the revolution what little wealth there was in the country was redistributed more or less equally. Immediately it became clear that to do merely that was not enough, but far more had to be produced if the Cuban people's needs were to be met. This meant exporting everything possible so that the money necessary to buy machinery, fertilizer, medicine and a million other items could be obtained. At the same time the United States was tightening the economic squeeze (and still is). Not only did the U.S. stop buying Cuban sugar, but North American companies began buying up European companies that did business with Cuba. Of course, that's a familiar story and you don't have to go to Cuba to find it out. What *is* surprising is the way the Cuban people appear to understand the necesity for sacrifice. The newspapers explain the situation over and over. If someone, through his actions, indicates that he doesn't understand then a representative of the local Committee for the Defense of the Revolution (and such a committee exists on virtually every block in the country) explains it. And Fidel explains it in his long speeches which are *not* boring because, unlike the political speeches we are acustomed to, they are made of facts, figures and specifics, not rhetoric.

I don't mean to imply that *everyone* understands and in some sense approves of the policy. Far from it. Great numbers of people continue to stream out of the country because of the austerity and because many people simply cannot adjust themselves to the notion that they will never have a chance to live in any sort of luxury. Cuba's just not the place where you can "make it." Others steal things. No one, however, steals money because there's nothing that you can do with money except go to restaurants. Otherwise things tend to be free (sports events, telephones; next year rents will be abolished) or not available at all. Still, the overall impression one gets is that the overwhelming majority understand and support the policies of the government. It's true.

The constant pressure being applied by the United States is not to be underestimated in this context. Whenever I asked people why they did all the things like volunteer work, overtime without pay and militia duty, the answer almost always included the necessity to defeat imperialism. It left me wondering where exactly they would be without us.

The most conspicuous and constant reminder that imperialism could strike at any moment is the militia men and women guarding and patroling all over the country. For anyone sympathetic to the Cuban revolution that should raise questions because all the while people are doing militia duty they are not producing and millions of manhours must be lost that way. For a pacifist, of course, it raises even more serious questions. On the one hand one doubts that the militia could put up a very serious defense (you have to see some of those middle aged ladies to know what I mean), on the other hand there was the Bay of Pig invasion which was stopped in a matter of hours. I for one had a lot of trouble relating to this aspect of Cuba. The best I could do was to rededicate myself to the nonviolent defeat of imperialism by those of us here in its "belly" so that the Cuban militia's effectiveness need not be tested. Simply to talk about nonviolence while in Cuba is pretty weird.

What Can We Learn?

There is very little in the Cuban experience that we can apply here as either a model for revolution or a model for the new society. There certainly are lots of little things such as setting up of committees of children to criticize text books before they are put into circulation and some pretty big ones like getting away from money. But those things which Cuba stands for such as a heroic guerrilla band in the Sierra Maestra fighting its way down into Havana or the one party state and all the control that that implies are not for us. Where we would do well to learn is in the importance the Cubans put on the children. They realize that young people will carry on the revolution and therefore place a great deal of emphasis on education and move them into positions of responsibility as quickly as possible. The result is lots of improvisation, learning on the job, mistakes and strong support of the revolution. Are you turning kids on to the revolution?

I want to make one final point. While it's true that in many ways the Cuban revolution is not "our revolution"—certainly not the pacifist revolution—there is the essential commitment to humane treatmen of fellow human beings, there is the actual striving to make life liveable for everyone. Let us not in our criticism of their position on Czechoslovakia, or this or that point, lose sight of how the Cubans are more like us than unlike us. We should criticize when necessary, but at the same time we should be working to see to it that the Cuban revolution survives and flowers.

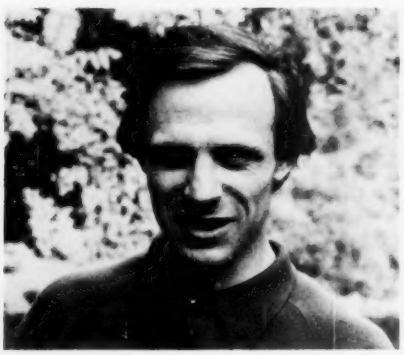
MEET THE WRI

These photos, taken by David McReynolds last August in Vienna, Austria, during the annual meeting of the Council of the War Resisters International, show a few of the faces from around the world that will gather in Haverford, Pa., during the last week of August, this year.

The War Resisters International will hold its Triennial Conference in Haverford from August 25-31. Any member of American groups affiliated to the WRI is invited to attend. Further information on he Conference will appear in the next issue of WRL NEWS.

This Triennial Conference will honor the Gandhi Centennial and will also be the first world pacifist conference ever held in the United States

MICHAEL RANDLE
Chairman



THE BRITISH DELEGATES

THE SCANDINAVIAN DELEGATES

DEVI PRASAD
Secretary

PIERRE MARTIN
Senegal

THE FRENCH DELEGATES

WHO PAYS OUR WAY *AND WHY?*

by David McReynolds

(Warning: reading this may easily cost you a dollar. If you read it seriously it could cost you anywhere from $100 to $1000).

One of the first questions we are asked when we talk with people about the work of the War Resisters League is: "Where do you get your money?" Sometimes the question is hostile, the implication being we live on gold from Moscow or Hanoi—or even the CIA. Usually the question is friendly. In every case it is serious—at least to the officers and staff of the WRL.

Let me say first who does *not* finance us. We get no money at all from any foundation. And because we are not a tax exempt organization we get very few large contributions—last year I think we got just one contribution for $1000. (We might get tax exemption, but that would so limit our freedom of action that it would change the character of the League).

We get our money from you, and this article is not a fund appeal but a serious report to you on the state of our finances. A discussion of money, where it comes from, and how it is used, may be boring but it is also one basis of a movement. You pay the salaries of the staff, which means you pay our rent and buy our food. You pay for the postage, the printing, the office space. When the executive Committee votes to give a subsidy to the Atlanta Workshop in Nonviolence or the New York Workshop in Nonviolence, they are spending your money.

We are in a serious financial situation just now, with a budget that is over $100,000 and a deficit that is almost $15,000. The Executive Committee is determined not to retreat, not to cut back on the work of the League, but the actual decision is yours. Because you have paid for the League, with a dollar here and five dollars there and a check for twenty dollars when you could afford it, I think you will want to know . . .

. . . Why We Are In A Financial Crisis.

1. The entire peace movement suffered financially during the political campaign. Money went to McCarthy or Cleaver or Gregory, or to local peace candidates.

2. When the Paris talks began and, particularly, when the bombing of North Vietnam ended, the general public felt the war was almost over. The League pointed out in its analysis of last June (copies of which are still available and, in our view, still basically sound) that the war was *not* over. We were, unhappily, right. Three thousand Americans and Vietnamese die every week.

3. As the League has expanded it has faced an unusual problem. When we grant a subsidy to a local group, such as the Atlanta Workshop in Nonviolence, or the Northern California WRL, our budget gets hit twice. First it means that a certain amount of money is taken out of the national budget and assigned to a given local area. But then, as that local area organizes, WRL members in the area, who once gave to the national office, tend to shift their contributions into the new local WRL group.

4. The League has an unusually large number of young members who do not have regular jobs and cannot afford to give much money. Therefore our active mailing list of ten thousand persons includes a great many who can give little more than a few dollars a year and some, living in real poverty, who can give nothing at all. The League has no membership fee, no dues. We work on the basis that those who can give will give and those who cannot give are still members and should receive the mailings.

Those four reasons help to explain why our situation is serious. If the present situation both nationally and internationally were not so desperate we would simply cut back office staff and office space, send out fewer mailings, print less material, etc. But we are absolutely convinced that the League must hold the "nonviolent beachead" it has gained in a society which is so oriented to violence.

The war is not over, but if it did end tomorrow it would only leave us free to deal with the much more fundamental problem of governments which believe their national interests can be served by threatening the literal destruction of mankind. We have lived so long with the muted ticking of the nuclear time bomb that we no longer hear it. The click-click of the geiger counter has become part of the background noise of modern life. Hiroshima fades into a shadow, the long scream of that August 6th is only an echo.

We face a double challenge because, at precisely that moment in history when nonviolence is imperative for human survival, many among the youth, and many among the oppressed here and in other lands, are turning to violence to deal with social problems. On the highest level of government we see madness in the decision to proceed with the ABM program. And now on the fringes of the peace movement we see that madness and brutalization of our time reflected by "militants" who break up meetings in the name of revolution, and move forward out of the shadows of our times bearing bottles and rocks and guns, seeking to storm the gates of heaven and seize the Kingdom of God through violence.

The League Is More Needed Today . . .

. . . we believe, than at any time since it was founded in 1923 and, sadly, we know that statement has appeared in almost every fund appeal in the last ten years. Yet it is true—for the human situation becomes steadily more abrasive and desperate, and each year the concepts of compassion, of sanity, and of revolution without violence become more needed than the year before.

This is not a "special appeal" for a few thousand dollars to handle our deficit. This is a long-term appeal to continue supporting the League. We appreciate very much and very deeply your willingness to let us experiment even with projects on which we do not have unanimous agreement, such as WIN magazine. The War Resisters League is a tenuous but real "fellowship of action" reaching from Vermont to Montana to Oregon to Florida, linking ten thousand persons in a living experiment with nonviolence. The War Resisters League is you, the money it spends to expand the pacifist position is your money. If you are young and a student, keep in mind that a single dollar helps. If you are older and have thought of making a will, remember the WRL and know that after your own death the League will continue, one of the few American radical groups to survive for nearly half a century, to grow, to remain relevant, radical, controversial —and effective. If you have given us only $5 or $10 a year but could afford to give $100, look over back copies of WRL NEWS and ask where else you could better give your money.

But always, in the beginning, and now, the question of whether the League advances or retreats is a personal question which you must answer.

The Bay Area Bombings

by Roy Kepler

EDITOR'S NOTE—Nine members of the Society of Man, a rightist Bible study group, were arrested in Menlo Park, California on February 14 and charged with 31 bombings and shootings over a 4-month period. In making the arrests police reportedly seized 75 pounds of black powder, bomb-making paraphernalia, 30 guns, stacks of extreme rightist literature, several Nazi flags and armbands and photos of Hitler and George Lincoln Rockwell. Among the individuals and radical organizations victimized was Roy Kepler, long-time WRLer and west coast activist, whose two bookstores were bombed several times. Until the arrests, Kepler opposed our publicizing the incidents. He was attempting to establish a dialogue with the perpetrators and make them see reason. Here he tells the story.

My earlier desire not to publicize the bombings of my bookstores has passed, since they were publicized by the February 14 arrests. My initial hope had been that the absence of publicity would fail to gratify the bombers, whereas printed reports of the incidents would tend to satisfy their egos.

Over a period of about four months, until the night of February 14 when nine persons were arrested, more than 35 incidents ranging from pellet-shootings at plateglass windows to bombings (about a quarter of all the incidents were bombings) occurred in the communities of Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Los Altos, Mountain View and Redwood City. These are contiguous towns along the peninsula just south of San Francisco.

Among the chief targets which were hit a number of times each were my two bookstores, the Midpeninsula Free University store and the office of Concerned Citizens of Palo Alto, which houses the local Resistance group.

There had been several isolated incidents af harassment in the months prior to November. But starting the middle of that month, there began a series of clearly related acts of violence which occurred with regularity every few nights.

After my Los Altos store was bombed on the night of November 24, it appeared necessary to initiate a nightly watch at several of the locations most frequently hit. Among the first to volunteer were two brothers, both members of the Resistance. In a conversation they mentioned to me their concern that a third brother might be involved in the rightists' attacks. Subsequently, they talked to him about it and he admitted attending a "Bible class" on Friday nights followed by bitter criticism of the Free University, my bookstores, etc.

This was the first tentative lead which pointed to the Society of Man, to which the nine persons arrested on February 14 belong. Other leads also pointed to this group. Eventually, the Menlo Park police infiltrated an officer into the Society of Man and this led to the arrests.

But more than two months before the arrests, in early December, I attended a session of the Bible class in an attempt to assess the prevailing attitudes and if possible establish a dialogue.

I found them stiffly polite, curious about me and quite ready to explain their particular religious viewpoint. The Bible lessons were taped sermons by a Rev. Bob Thieme of Houston, Texas. The dominant theme is that man cannot save himself, or even help himself—that he is a sinner who can be saved only by accepting God through Christ. Any effort to change the world through one's own efforts, morality or good works is doomed to failure and in effect is Satanism, which is synonymous with Communism. God ordained the nations, therefore man must not tamper with them through internationalism. The United Nations is a Communist conspiracy to impose a world government on the nations.

Obviously it was not easy to establish dialogue with these individuals by asserting my own values. Therefore, I tried to appeal to theirs. When I was asked, for instance, why I believe in nonviolence and whether I would fight to protect the nation from Communism, I replied that the early Christians would not join armies or carry lethal weapons. They tended either to back way from answering this argument or to refer to the Old Testament and its God of Wrath.

Now that the whole situation with the bombings is at a different juncture, the question again arises as to what is the best solution, given all the contending demands and forces of society. A clearcut answer cannot be given. The outcome will be neither black nor white but rather a jumble of the attitudes and practices which prevail.

TWO NEW BOOKS

GUIDE TO THE DRAFT. Most complete book on the subject by two expert draft counselors of the Central Committee for COs: Arlo Tatum and Joseph Tuchinsky.
paperback $1.95

UNDERDOGS VERSUS UPPER-DOGS. The autobiography of a nonviolent actionist (your editor, Jim Peck) who has walked hundreds of picket-line miles, has been arrested 30 times to date and was beaten almost to death in the first 1961 Freedom Ride. paperback (all proceeds to WRL) $1.50

IN BRIEF

In bitter cold starting February 8, five members of the Emergency Committee on Nigeria & Biafra, including WRL staff member Peter Kiger, participated in a 3-day walk from Baltimore to Washington.

* * *

And, speaking of Peter Kiger, U.S. Judge VanPelt Bryan on March 13 found him guilty of burning his draft card publicly, in the office, just three years ago. He will be sentenced on April 17. *Picketing and draft card burning is planned for 10 a.m. at the federal courthouse in Foley Square.*

ENROLLMENT BLANK

Send to War Resisters League
5 Beekman Street, New York, N.Y. 10038

WAR IS A CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY.
I THEREFORE AM DETERMINED NOT TO SUPPORT ANY KIND OF WAR, INTERNATIONAL OR CIVIL, AND TO STRIVE FOR THE REMOVAL OF ALL THE CAUSES OR WAR

signature _____

address _____

city _____ *state* _____

occupation _____ *age* _____